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NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

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WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?

With autonomous chapters in more than 150 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to analyze issues affecting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Indypendent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write and distribute for The Indypendent, videotape events and rallies, update the website, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

VOLUNTEER STAFF:

Sam Alcoff, Nicholas Allanach, Chris Anderson, Steven Arnerich, Kazembe Balagun, Gino Barzizza, Charlie Bass, Rennett I Raumer Leila Rinder Lar Bouwer, Jed Brandt, Mike Burke, José Carmona, Antrim Caskey, Kepfram Cauley, Susan Chenelle, Linnea Covington, Ellen Davidson, Lauren Denitzio, Ryan Dunsmuir, Jeff Faerber, David Ferris, Leo Garcia, Sandyra George, Anna Gold, Samantha Gorelick, Liana Grey, A.K. Gupta, Leijia Hanrahan, Mary Heglar, Dennis Ho, Irina Ivanova, Gillian Kalson, Ruth Kelton, Ula Kuras, Jessica Lee, Gary Martin, Edgar Mata, Clark Merrefield, Nik Moore, Ana Nogueira, Donald Paneth, Nicholas Powers, Frank Reynoso, Ann Schneider, Andrew Stern, Sarah Stuteville, John Tarleton, Xavier Tayo, Erin Thompson, Chloe Tribich, Carly Triche, Hannah Vahl, Stephanie Wakefield, Matthew Wasserman, Steven Wishnia, Amy Wolf & Christina Zawerucha.

Upcoming Open Indypendent Editorial Mtgs Tuesdays April 10 & May 1, 7pm 4 W. 43rd Street, Suite 311 contact@indymedia.org

Please send event announcements to indyevents@gmail.com

ONGOING

Daily • Mon-Fri 5:30-7:30pm BOYCOTT/PICKET FOR DELIVERY WORKERS' RIGHTS. Please come show your support for delivery workers at the nightly Saigon Grill picket being held at both restaurant locations. 620 Amsterdam @ 90th St & 93 University @ 11th St. nmass@yahoo.com • 212-334-2333

THRU JULY I

Daily, closed Mon. / Tue. • \$8 suggested EXHIBITION: GLOBAL FEMINISMS. A chronicle of contemporary feminist art from 1990 to the present at the Brooklyn Museum. 200 Eastern Parkway, Bklyn. 718-638-5000

EVERY SUNDAY

3pm 'til Late • \$3 OPEN MIC: SOS - THE SUNDAY OPEN SERIES. Open poetry reading 156 Rivington St. • 212-254-3697

APRIL 6 - 27

Call for hours . Free EXHIBITION: PICTURE BALATA, A PHOTO SHOW BY WEST BANK YOUTHS. Brecht Forum 451 West St. (btw Bank & Bethune Sts.) 212-242-4201 • brechtforum@brechtforum.org

SAT APR 7

12 - 2pm • Free TRAINING/DISCUSSION: WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN YOUR RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED IN DETENTION, JAIL OR PRISON? Come find out at this workshop being held by Families for Freedom and NY Legal Aid Society. Located in downtown Bklyn. RSVP: andaula@fas.harvard.edu 646-351-9868 • familiesforfreedom.org

SUN APR 8

11:30am • Free ACTION: ANNUAL PEACESTERS PARADE TO BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW. March and drumming begins at noon, meet at 59th and 5th Ave. Please bring a percussion instrument. March goes down 5th Ave. then back up, 59th St. to 40th St.

MON APR 9

6:30pm • Donations FUNDRAISER: ACOUSTIC SHOW PRE-SENTED BY A NEW WORLD IN OUR HEARTS. Funds assist "illegal" immigrants to fight deportation in court.

Ad Hoc Art Space 49 Bogart St., Bklyn. • adhocart.org & myspace.com/anewworldinourhearts

TUE APR 10

6:30pm • Free (bring something to share) POTLUCK SEDER: Jews Against the Occupation NYC is celebrating Passover by working for justice and peace in Israel/Palestine. Please bring something to share that is preferably kosher and not made in Israel. Judson Memorial Church,

55 Wash Sq South. RSVP: after.exodus@gmail.com

WED APR II

7:30pm • Free INDY KIDS MEETING. Participate in a children's newspaper, a "free paper for free kids." Help us with copy editing the new issue and brainstorming for our teacher's guide. NYC Indymedia Office, 4 W. 43rd St., Suite 311. • indykids.net

indykids@indymedia.org • 212-592-0116

THU APR 12

7:30pm ◆ Free FILM: BROOKLYN MATTERS. Learn about proposed Atlantic Yards project & meet

Brooklyn Free School, 120 16th St., Bklyn RSVP: contact@brooklynfreeschool.org

SAT APR 14

NATIONAL DAY AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE. See page 3 for more info about various events & actions throughout NYC.

11am - 7pm • Free (bring \$ for books) BOOK FAIR: 1ST ANNUAL, 1ST EVER NYC ANARCHIST BOOK FAIR! Judson Memorial Church, 55 Wash Sq. South. • judson.org (See ad on p 11 for info)

DISCUSSION: ISRAELI HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST DOROTHY NAOR ON "THE COST OF THE OCCUPATION TO ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN SOCIETIES." Sponsored by Bklyn Parents for Peace and Bklyn Friends Peace and Social Action Committee. **Bklyn Friends Meeting House** 110 Schermerhorn St. @ Boerum

Noon • Free PROTEST: AGAINST TORTURE ON U.S. TV FOX'S "24." W/ speaker Carlos Mauricio (a torture survivor). Sponsored by SIA Watch & NY CISPES.

718-624-5921

Meet at FOX News Corp. Headquarters 48th St & 6th Ave. 201-207-1493 • nycsoaw.org

SUN APR 15

8pm • \$12

BENEFIT: "MUMIA 911" HIP HOP SHOW. W/A-Alikes, C Rayz Walz, Imessiah Soul, Queen Godis, Seeds of Wisdom, Pat-riot. Proceeds go to Int'l Concerned Family, Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal & MOVE Organization. Remote Lounge 327 Bowery (btw E 2nd & 3rd Sts.) 347-267-8259 • lumumba170@aol.com myaspace.com/_rebel_child

THU APR 19

4pm • Free ACTION: PARADE WITHOUT A PERMIT. Stand up to the NYPD's new restrictions on freedom of assembly Meet at City Hall, 260 Broadway

7:30pm • Free (\$7 for supper at 7pm) FILM/DISCUSSION: "STANDING ON MY SISTERS' SHOULDERS," BY JOAN SADOFF, ROBERT SADOFF & LAURA J LIPSON. The Civil Rights movement in Mississippi from point view of grassroots African-American women who organized the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Sponsored by Radical Women. Freedom Hall

113 W. 128th St. (btw Malcolm X & Adam Clayton Powell Blvds) 212-222-0633 radicalwomen.org nycradicalwomen@nyct.net

FRI APR 20 - SUN APR 22

CONFERENCE: "HOW THE CHURCH HAS FAILED US: A WAY BACK FROM SPIRITUAL VIOLENCE." Clergy and spiritual leaders to speak. Sponsored by Student Senate of Union Theological Seminary. Judson Memorial Church 55 Wash Sq South. dominique.chantell@gmail.com

SAT APR 21

8pm • \$12/\$9 suggested MUSIC: FOLKY + JAZZY + POPPY = ELLEN DAVIDSON AND ADELE ROLIDER. The Peoples' Voice Cafe at the Workmen's Circle. 45 E. 33rd St. (btw Madison & Park) 212-787-3903 • peoplesvoicecafe.org

THU APR 26

8pm • Free RISING TIDE ROADSHOW: CONFRONTING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CLIMATE CHANGE. Come learn more about global climate change and what is being done to change things. Times Up! Space 49 E Houston St. (btw Mott & Mulberry). times-up.org

THU APR 26 - 28

All day • \$95/\$45 students/seniors. CONFERENCE: "LABOR'S VOICES 3: MEDIA FOR A NEW WORKERS' MOVEMENT." Join grassroots activists, journalists, union organizers, scholars, media-makers in networking & developing media strategies to connect disparate constituencies & support a new global workers' movement. **CUNY Grad Center** 34th St. & 5th Ave. • 917-533-4796 laborsvoices.org/about

THU APR 27

6:30pm • Free FILM: BROOKLYN MATTERS. Learn about proposed Atlantic Yards project. & meet filmmakers and local activists. Judson Memorial Church 55 Wash Sq South brooklynmatters.com



Youth photographers featured in the "Picture Balata" exhibit at the Brecht Forum April 6-27 (see calendar). PHOTO COURTESY OF PICTUREBALATA.NET

READER COMMENTS

In regards to your story on protesters blocking military shipments, ("Stryker Blockade Intensifies, Washington State Activists Attempt to Stop Iraq Weapons Shipment at Port of Tacoma"—March 15) the military chose Tacoma because Olympia simply wasn't available (schedule conflict). It was done at night to avoid the horrendous traffic that is often found in the Tacoma area. The Strykers simply don't stop very quickly, and they wanted to avoid any possible collisions or other obstacles. There is plenty of support for this war and our troops.

-Not Retarded

Congrats to The Indypendent on this milestone ("The Indy at 100"—March 15). This country has come a long way since Sept. 11 and so has this paper. Let's hope The Indypendent is around for years to come, because God forbid this war is around for vears to come.

—SUPPORTER

CORRECTIONS

Due to an editing error in ("Fighting Rape with Art"—March 15) the author's point that the art world is "white controlled and sometimes racist," was changed by adding 'despite some high-profile shows like "Global Feminisms" currently at Brooklyn Museum. The sentence should read: "The male art world generally ignores the problem of violence against women and the feminist art movement is white controlled and sometimes racist, resulting in a low

percentage of women of color artists in museums and galleries.'

Ana Nogueira's name was misspelled ("The Indy at One Hundred"—March 15).

In ("Artists Blend Crafts at Bill-burg Studio"— March 15) the origin of the name ABC No Rio was incorrectly sourced. The space takes its name from the reflection of a decayed sign across the street that once said "Abogado Notorio" and looked as if it said "Abc No rio."



The Rising Sea of Action

Creative New Yorkers Turn Up the Political Heat

BY JESSICA LEE

ooking down from the sky, it will appear as if the cold waters of the Hudson and East Rivers are flowing up and over the banks of lower Manhattan Island. That's the visual image that the organizers of "Sea of People" hope to create on April 14 when thousands of people dressed in blue gather in Battery Park to make a point about the consequences of global warming.

Joining more than 1,100 actions in all 50 states for the Step It Up! Campaign on the National Day Against Climate Change, New York City organizers hope that this dramatic action will help convince Congress to cut global warming – causing pollution by 80 percent by 2050.

The Sea of People website states it bluntly: "New York City's coastal location makes it particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels and more powerful storm events that will result from unabated warming ... Permanent inundation could result, with the collapse of either the Greenland or Antarctic ice shelves, which would lead to a 10- to 20-foot rise in sea level. Such a rise would greatly reconfigure the map of our city, sinking much of lower Manhattan beneath the water."

The secret to keeping parts of New York from going under water in the next 50 years is in understanding ways we can lessen our impact, by preparing for the future and getting involved," noted Sung Bin Park, one of the numerous Sea of People organizers.

More than 30 different events are being held in all five boroughs of New York City to bring home the message that urgent change is needed to curb carbon emissions in order to avoid large-scale catastrophe. From musicians in the subway and Central Park to a Bronx River Tribute, picnics in Queens and Park Slope to a Lower East Side Live Organic Vegan Experience (LOVE), New Yorkers hope not only to



strengthen the national message to politicians, but also to build sustainable communities.

The Water Rising Flotilla action is looking for local paddlers, canoers and kayakers to create a mass of human powered vessels to cruise through the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn. "This is a historic body of water that has been neglected by the community for 100 years and is one of the most polluted bodies of water in the city," said Ludger K. Balan, executive director and founder of the Urban Divers Estuary Conservancy. "As a community completely surrounded by water, we also need to make sure that climate change makes it into policy governing new development along the canal."

Time's Up!, a local direct-action environmental group, is planning a bike ride following future sea levels along Manhattan Island as a way to highlight that non-polluting transportation is one part of the solution. They suggest participants dress as if they are biking under water.

Other national efforts collaborating with Step It Up! include Rainforest Action Network's campaign against the nation's largest investment banks for their connection to new coal-fueled power plants, a top source of fossil-fuels pollution. JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Citi, Morgan Stanley, Merrill Lynch, Crédit Suisse and Lehman Brothers will be targeted across the country. The Sierra Club's ongoing national Cool Cities campaign has spurred local leaders to help create innovative energy solutions as a way to tackle global warming city by city.

The Step It Up! campaign aims to bring attention to global warming by holding actions at some of the most vulnerable places in the nation, including at melting mountaintop glaciers, under water near coral reefs in the Florida Keys, in farmlands and along the tidelines of coastal cities. "This is the America we want to defend against the massive change that would come with global warming - it's the America we dearly love," notes the group's website, stepitup2007.org.

take action

AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

For a complete list of the more than 30 NYC events, please visit Step It Up! (stepitup2007.org)

SEA OF PEOPLE

Noon. Meet at Battery Park for a community walk up both sides of Manhattan Island. Wear blue.

FUTURE SEA LEVEL BIKE RIDE

1-2:30pm. Meet at south side of Union Square Park. Ride ends at Battery Park. Dress as if you are under water.

EARTHFAIR

Noon-7pm. Environmental festival in Vanderbilt Hall inside Grand Central Terminal at 42nd St. and Park Ave. Learn what you can do to decrease your energy footprint.

LIVE ORGANIC VEGAN EXPERIENCE (L.O.V.E.)

8-10pm. 101 Stanton St @ Orchard St. Conscious music for a global cause.

BUSINESSES BEHIND CHANGE

April 13 - 4-4:30pm. 155 6th Ave., 15th Fl. "Green" businesstypes for change.

PANOPEA PICNICS AGAINST GLOBAL

Noon-4pm. Potluck in Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Meet at the Grand Army Plaza entrance at noon or join us by the Picnic House on the Long Meadow.

GREEN NIGHT AT THE GEN ART FILM FESTIVAL & AFTERPARTY

3pm-midnight. Clearview Chelsea West Cinemas, 333 W. 23rd St. (btw 8th & 9th Ave.) Expected to sell out, get tickets at genartfilmfestival.com. Afterparty with ticket only at Arena, 135 W. 41st St.

WATER RISING FLOTILLA THROUGH **GOWANUS CANAL**

2-4pm. Meet at 2nd St. and Bond St. at the Gowanus Canal, Brooklyn. Bring own boat or come to help paddle! For more info: Urban Divers Estuary Conservancy, 718-802-9874.

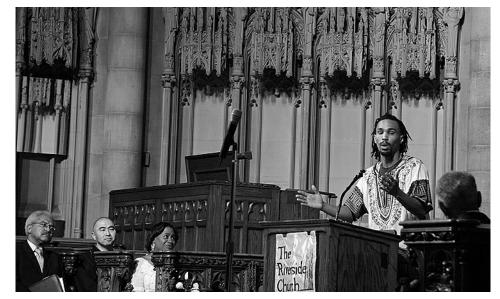
BIODYNAMIC WINE TASTING

2-6pm. Red, white & bubbly. 211 5th Ave., Brooklyn. Drink organic and fair-trade wines and learn about grape pesticides, the second most-sprayed crop.

BANDS IN CENTRAL PARK

2-6pm. Listen to local bands to support Step It Up! Central Park at the Bandshell.

MLK'S ANTIWAR MESSAGE ECHOES 40 YEARS LATER

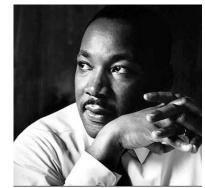


BEYOND VIETNAM ... AND IRAQ: Poet Kahlil Almustafa speaks at the April 1 ceremony at New York's Riverside Church commemorating the 40th anniversary of "Beyond Vietnam," Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s historic antiwar speech. Delivered at the height of the Vietnam War, King's April 4, 1967 speech delivered at Riverside offered a radical, far-reaching critique of U.S. society and its penchant for military aggression. He was assassinated exactly one year later in Memphis, Tenn. PHOTO: LANI BOUWER

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

"Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war... Moreover, when the issues at hand seem as perplexing as they often do in the case of this dreadful conflict, we are always on the verge of being mesmerized by uncertainty; but we must move on. ...

I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent. ...



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING. JR. PHOTO COURTESY OF AFRICAWITHIN.COM

"The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit ... and if we ignore this sobering reality, we will find ourselves \dots marching \dots and attending rallies without end \dots

"We as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered."

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Riverside Church, April 4, 1967

Fighting for Union Democracy

he Longshore Workers Coalition (LWC) is an upstart faction vying for union democracy in the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA.) The LWC originated as a group of dissident longshore workers challenging faulty election practices employed by union officials during the 2004 ratification of the ILA's master contract – a labor agreement the workers labeled a "sellout."

During the June 2004 election, workers alleged vote tampering and coercion were used to get the contract. Newark Local 1235 long-shoreman Diego Martinez testified he was coerced to vote for an inadequate contract by a union trustee. "After he saw I voted no, he put the paper to the side and said, 'You don't understand, you have to vote yes.'"

Teaming with the Association for Union Democracy, who provided legal representation, dissidents from the 15,000-member ILA fought the master contract, which covers wages and benefits for every East Coast port, in federal court.

A federal court judge eventually ruled against the union dissidents – saying that they had not established voter coercion. —BB

East Coast vs. West Coast

The wages, benefits and political orientation of the East Coast and West Coast longshore worker unions are starkly different. Though each union has a modest membership, their critical role in the ports gives each the potential to bring the nation's economy to a halt. However, the ILA makes little effort to organize new workers and has not had a coordinated union-wide job action of any significance in decades. New hires on ILA-represented ports earn as much as six dollars less than their West Coast counterparts and garner generally inferior benefits.

At one time members of the same union, West Coast longshore workers broke with the ILA in 1937 over industrial union organizing and the ILA's stance against the West Coast longshore strike of 1934. The progressive International Longshore and Warehouse Union struck against stevedore companies in 2002 over the loss of jobs and benefits, shutting down 29 West Coast ports.

The 2002 strike ended as a defensive victory for port workers, though President Bush threatened military intervention and evoked Taft-Hartley laws to break the West Coast union.

Taking on the Mob:



Longshoremen from Local 1588 in Bayonne, NJ hope that upcoming elections herald the end of Mafia domination of their union. PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY

BY BENNETT BAUMER

he longshoremen of Local 1588 in Bayonne, NJ knew their place – they worked and kept their mouths shut. When your past union president, an exboxer named John DiGilio, is found floating in the Hackensack River with two bullet holes in his head, you don't ask too many questions. When the man who usurped the local from him threatens to settle disputes with a blowtorch to the crotch, you don't go to the union office to voice concerns about benefits or safety issues.

"Every once in awhile you'd find out somebody got assassinated," says Jorge Aguilar, who's worked the docks for 19 years. "The [only copy of the] contract was kept in the union office and you didn't want to ask for a copy."

But that is all about to change, as a group of reformers is poised to take power in an April 19 local union election. Gone is the fear instilled by decades of Mafia domination in Local 1588 of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), which was immortalized in Elia Kazan's 1954 classic, *On the Waterfront*.

Since a government trusteeship was put in place four years ago to root out mob influence in the 450-member local, reformers have emerged from the shadows.

"You see more democracy and folks are more willing to speak," says Aguilar, who

was elected shop steward by Local 1588 members last year. He's now running for a vice-presidential post on the "Unity, Power, Respect" slate.

The reform slate is guaranteed to take power of the local, as it is running unopposed for all but one position. They plan to take office on May 1, International Workers' Day.

But lurking in the background is the Genovese crime family, believed by many law-enforcement officials to control the New Jersey docks and numerous union locals. While government prosecutors have convicted some Local 1588 officials of racketeering and forced out a number of alleged mobsters from the docks, others are scheming to make a comeback.

The reformers got an opening in 2003 when U.S. District Court Judge John Martin appointed former New York City Police Commissioner Robert McGuire to be the trustee of Local 1588. Martin called the local "a cesspool of union corruption" after two officials pled guilty to defrauding the local of at least \$1.3 million in a mob-controlled scheme.

Judge Martin forced out John Timpanaro as president of Local 1588 for violating a decade-old consent decree prohibiting union officials from associating with mobsters. According to a 2005 Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) complaint, Timpanaro was accused of associating with the Genovese crime family and of being

involved in a kickback-for-hire scandal. Sources at the local say Timpanaro demanded bribes of up to \$15,000 for jobs or more hours on the docks.

"I tried to get in before. They [union officials] were very particular with who they let in," said Manny Ferreras, whose father was a longshoreman. "They would let you in if they thought you'd be loyal to their crew." Ferreras was finally hired under the trusteeship four years ago and now is part of the reform slate.

According to the 2005 RICO complaint against the parent body, the ILA, Timpanaro did the bidding of alleged Genovese associate Nicholas Furina, who in turn reported to reputed capo Larry Ricci.

Feds say Ricci, who listed milkman as his occupation, was the Genoveses' man on the New Jersey docks. Ricci allegedly defrauded the union's health benefits fund with Newark Local 1235 President Al Cernadas and used Furina to intimidate 1588 members. Cernadas pled guilty to charges of fraud and conspiracy in September 2005.

Just weeks later, in October, Ricci disappeared while on trial for racketeering with two other ILA officers. Ricci was acquitted but it did him little good. His bullet-ridden body was found in November 2005 after a customer at a New Jersey diner complained about a "foul odor and a mass of flies swarming around the trunk of a car" in the parking lot.

Ricci allegedly headed the crew of Local 1588 that controlled the Bayonne docks. Speculation is that the Genovese family ordered Ricci whacked. They wanted him to take the fall and plead guilty so as not to bring unwanted attention to the crime family during the trial.

On March 29, federal prosecutors linked Michael Coppola, also a reputed Genovese captain, to Ricci's killing after he was recorded discussing the gun used in the murder. A familiar face on *America's Most Wanted*, Coppola had been cuffed weeks earlier by police after being on the lam for more than a decade in connection with the murder of button man Johnny "Coca Cola" Lardiere in 1977.

According to a 2004 New Jersey state report on organized crime, Ricci took over a Jersey-based crew headed by alleged Genovese capo Tino Fiumara and an onthe-run Coppola. *Gangland News* described Fiumara as "a power on the New Jersey docks." Fiumara, who was sprung from prison in 2005, is poised to become the next Genovese boss.

More bucks for organizing embattled workers

-BB

Labor Notes estimates that more than \$8.6 million would be available for organizing if ILA officials cut their pay back to \$100,000 per year, which is on par with what senior longshore workers may earn. Here's a look at top ILA earners, many of whom earn both local and international union salaries.

- **John Bowers** \$568,023

Albert Cernadas \$499,915

- Robert Gleason \$383,012

Benny Holland \$348,099

THESE CHARMING MEN

Tino Fiumara

Described as "a power on the New Jersey docks," by Gangland News, Fiumara is a Genovese capo. He was released from prison in 2005, and is poised to become the next Genovese boss.



APRIL 5 – 25, 2007 THE INDYPENDENT

—ВВ

Jersey Dockworkers Tell Corrupt Union Bosses to Take Long Walk on Short Pier

Though union reformers acknowledge the history of mob influence they vow to move beyond it.

"The past has been spoken about so much," said the reformist slate's presidential candidate, Anthony Falcicchio. Mob figures would still have to contend with the trustees, who will continue to monitor the local's affairs for 18 months after

Local 1588 members greeted the government trusteeship with suspicion at first, though most agree it kept the mob away and allowed reformers to emerge. Trustee Robert McGuire came to the docks bearing baggage as a former CEO of Pinkerton, Inc., a notorious security agency that has provided hired thugs to union-busting efforts for decades.

Nonetheless, rank-and-file longshoremen found space to organize. They agitated against the 2004 master contract negotiated by alleged mob associates in control of the 15,000-member ILA. The contract pitted worker against worker by instituting a multi-tier system within the international, reducing pay and benefits for all new hires. The reformers also gained traction by pushing job safety concerns and enforcement of seniority rights.

Tony Perlstein represents the new face of Local 1588. He is one of the leading union activists on the Bayonne docks and cochairs the dissident Longshore Workers Coalition – a group consisting of members from other East Coast ports organizing for union democracy.

"Given a free choice, our union [members] will do the right thing," says South Carolina longshoreman Leonard Riley, who co-chairs the coalition. Riley exults that in Local 1588, "allegedly one of the most corrupt locals now is being lead by reformers."

A former Teamster organizer and graduate of Brown University, Perlstein got a job when the trustees opened the ports to new hires. He connected 1588's plight to longshoremen in Charleston, who fought a racist political climate to defend striking union members in the Charleston five case (see sidebar).

"If the union can take on the fights that the members care about it, it will be more difficult for them {the mob} to come back," Perlstein said. Perlstein is running for treasurer on the reform slate.

Though New York tabloids recycle screaming "Last Don" headlines with every high-profile mafia-boss arrest, union reformers are ever cognizant that wise guys will not easily relinquish their stranglehold

Adding to the concern, top ILA officials, including General Organizer Harold Daggett, beat the rap in the 2005 RICO trial and the feds' case is now floundering. Daggett is flexing his muscles in the union as members of his Local 1804-1 did multiple job actions recently to protest working

"There's been no basic change in the ILA leadership, and it has a record going back generations of racketeering domination," commented Herman Benson, an elder statesman of union democracy movements and secretary-treasure of the Association for Union Democracy (AUD). Government trustees hired a key component of the local's transformation in former AUD Executive Director Carl Biers, Biers serves as the Local 1588 education director.

Daggett could be up for the presidency of the ILA this summer at the international union's convention. Also sure to come up at this summer's convention is the ILA's health benefits fund reserve, estimated in the hundreds of millions.

After projecting a health benefit fund deficit of hundreds of millions of dollars at the onset of the contract, the ILA recently reversed itself and said there will be a \$600million reserve by 2010. The stage is set for stevedore companies and ILA leadership to bargain over who gets a piece of the savings. Angry Local 1588 and workers in other ports have also experienced frustration when international leaders changed the benefits plan mid-contract. The changes raised copays and many doctors left the plan.

Employers have also flooded the ports with new hires that start at \$16 per hour and must work at least 700 hours per year to qualify for benefits. Because the ports are so flooded with manpower and longshoremen are dissuaded from taking other jobs, many workers find it difficult to secure heath care. ILA members balk at the mediocre compensation with the Port New York/New Jersey awash in \$149 billion worth of cargo, shattering the previous year's record.

Reformers in Local 1588 are also focused on day-to-day job safety issues at the Bayonne piers.

"I'm a crane operator and my back is bent over for hours at a time," Virgil Maldonado, a reform candidate for a vice president position, said.

While longshoremen rarely lift cargo as technology has transformed the piers through containerization, they describe the work as exhausting. It ranges from driving loaders to sitting high above the pier operating cranes, requiring workers to be hunched in vibrating machinery for excruciating double shifts.

The slate plans to survey the members over their concerns and possibly set up a safety board.

"The real change begins when we get elected," Ferreras said.



Jorge Aguilar, center, Local 1588 shop steward and 19-year dock veteran, is on a reform slate in upcoming union elections. PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY

Michael Coppola

Cops cuffed capo Coppola in March for the 1977 murder of a gangster known as "Johnny Cokes." Cokes taunted Coppola when his gun jammed in the 1977 slaying. Coppola pulled a second gun from his ankle, killing Cokes. Coppola is also implicated in the murder of Larry Ricci, who controlled the Jersey docks until his death in 2005.

Larry Ricci

Reputed Genovese capo Ricci disappeared mid-way through his 2005 trial. It's believed he was killed by Genovese hierarchy for not pleading guilty on racketeering-influenced and corrupt organizations charges. Ricci listed milkman as his occupation but feds say he ran Fiumara and Coppolas' crew in their absence.

—BB



S. Carolina **Dockworkers** Show the Way

BY SAM ALCOFF

≺he corporate media's penchant for tales of union corruption and mob-ties serves an underlying agenda for union-busting, but workers have a different impetus for clean strong unions: They serve as one of the best tools for advancing working-class interests. One of the best examples of this is International Longshoremen's Association Local 1422 and the case of the Charleston Five.

In 2000, a Danish shipping company, Nordana, attempted to break the union on Charleston docks with scab labor at half the pay, and the union began picketing. Local 1422 had a solid history of internal reform initiatives and a solid rank-and-file membership and had played a strong role in the previous year's successful campaign to remove the Confederate flag flying high over the South Carolina Capitol Building.

With the lowest rate of unionization in the country and more than a fifth of children living below the poverty line, South Carolina is run by a wealthy elite whose dependence on black poverty has shaped state politics since slavery. Since 1954, state legislators have enforced anti-union legislation cynically called "right-to-work." This legislation bars union security clauses, allowing workers in a unionized shop who receive the economic benefits of union representation to avoid paying the dues that cover the cost of maintaining the union. Union strength is immediately diminished. Given this, ambitious South Carolina Attorney General Charlie Condon wanted to prove that he would enforce South Carolina's peculiar institutions and Local 1422's picket was the low-hanging fruit.

In late January 2000, more than 600 heavily armed police descended on the picketing dockworkers with racist threats and physical intimidation. The dockworkers responded, and nine were arrested. Charges were dropped, but Condon quickly introduced new felony riot charges against five: one white, four Black. They were placed under house arrest for over two years while the attorney general compared them to "terrorists," explicitly evoking 9/11, and used the incident to justify South Carolina's anti-worker laws in a campaign ad for Bush. While Condon's plan to demonize the dockworkers may have seemed like a free pass to the governor's mansion, he didn't count on the union's political dynamism and solid organizing work.

Kenneth Riley Jr., president of ILA Local 1422, toured North America and Europe, linking the case to racism, globalization and the fate of the labor movement. Nordana quickly caved after Spanish dockworkers refused to unload the company's ships. Meanwhile, hundreds of posters went up, rallies were organized and national media coverage bloomed. Police officers were quoted questioning the harsh treatment of the five, and the attorney general removed himself from the case after unions across the South began sarcastically thanking Condon $\frac{1}{8}$ for re-energizing the labor movement. Condon's political career was quickly derailed. Though the individual cases for the Charleston Five resulted in much-reduced plea bargains, the larger lesson was clear: A strong militant union can take on the bosses and politicians and win.

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IMMOKALEE WORKERS TO MCDONALD'S:

We're Not Lovin' It

BY SUSAN CHENELLE

South Florida's Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is going after Ronald McDonald. Two years ago, the coalition's nationwide campaign won a historic victory over Taco Bell, forcing the fast-food giant to pay tomato pickers a penny more per pound and adhere to a labor code of conduct.

Organizer Lucas Benitez told *The Indypendent* that CIW has been pleased with the implementation of the Taco Bell agreement and that workers have been receiving an extra check when they pick tomatoes for Taco Bell. If the tomato-pickers' raise were implemented across the fast food market, it would mean approximately \$7,000 more in annual income for workers, bringing their earnings only up to poverty level.

"We wrote to McDonald's asking them to join the [Taco Bell] agreement," Benitez explained, but over the last two years, "the company has allied with the growers." In particular, shortly after CIW launched its

observed that, "It is often more strategic to organize for social change at the point of consumption rather than the point of production." And so, as in the 2005 Taco Bell campaign, CIW is going on tour to raise consciousness and build pressure on McDonald's. Approximately 70 workers will go on a 10day tour through five states beginning April 7. The high point will be a rally outside McDonald's global headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois, on April 13, followed by a Carnival and Parade for Fair Food, Real Rights and Dignity in Chicago on April 14. Those scheduled to join CIW in Chicago include Tom Morello and Zack de la Rocha of Rage Against the Machine, and Dolores Huerta and John Sweeney (AFL-CIO).

Benitez encouraged those who wish to support the campaign to join them in Chicago. The campaign is also asking supporters to organize local events at McDonald's locations.

On April 27-29, the Alliance for Fair Food, which works in partnership with CIW, is co-



ARTWORK COURTESY OF CIW

public pressure campaign in late 2005, McDonald's announced that it would only buy tomatoes from farms certified under the newly developed Socially Accountable Farm Employers (SAFE) protocols. This measure, along with further "rigorous new practices," the company claimed, would result in workers earning more than the extra penny per pound CIW has campaigned for. To back up its assertions, McDonald's commissioned two studies, which have been criticized for being methodologically unsound.

CIW responded by asking, if workers were really earning so much more, why not

agree to guarantee the penny-perpound raise? The group further pointed out that the new practices did not provide for any worker input and consisted largely of standards already required by law.

In an "Open Letter to Ronald McDonald" published on wiretap.org, Jordan Buckley, a member of the Student-Farm worker Alliance affiliate in Austin, Texas,

sponsoring a Clean Clothes and Fair Food Conference in New York at Columbia Law School. Organizers are planning a variety of actions following the conference, including sending groups to 100 McDonald's restaurants around the city to deliver letters asking the company to join the CIW agreement.

"We are tired, as Martin Luther King Jr. said, of 'relying on the good will and understanding of those who profit by exploiting us," a statement on the CIW website explains. If by the end of the tour, McDonald's has not acquiesced to the workers' demands, the group will pursue "more aggressive" measures, according to Benitez.

Bus tickets to Chicago are \$85 roundtrip. To reserve a seat, email celeste@sfalliance.org. Interested individuals can help craft materials for the New York actions at the Change You Want to See Gallery at 84 Havemeyer in Williamsburg on Saturdays between noon and 4pm. To register for the New York conference, visit alliance-

forfairfood.org.

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BY ELEANOR J. BADER

nortly after Amber Abreu, a teenaged immigrant from the Dominican Republic, arrived in the United States in 2005, she became pregnant and had an abortion. Months later, the Massachusetts resident became pregnant again.

Not wanting to admit a second mistake or ask her mother for money, the now-18year-old Abreu asked a friend to bring her some Cytotec pills from the Dominican Republic when she came to visit. Cytotec, an ulcer medication known to cause uterine contractions, is sold over the counter in the D.R. for approximately \$1.00 a pill.

It is worth noting that Cytotec, called Misoprostol in the United States, is legal and widely used to treat stomach ulcers. It is also used in combination with Mifepristone to terminate pregnancies of up to eight weeks gestation. The drug combo is popularly known as RU486.

While Abreu has been advised not to speak to the press at this time, she previously told reporters from The Boston Herald that she took three Cytotec tablets over two-days in early January. On January 6 she went to Lawrence General Hospital complaining of stomach pain; later that day she delivered a 20-ounce baby girl. The premature baby - named Ashley by Abreu - was taken to Tufts-New England Medical Center where she died on January 10. Urine tests revealed Cytotec in the baby's system.

Police became involved when a hospital social worker reported that Abreu had given her conflicting accounts about why the newborn tested positive for Cytotec. Abreu was later arraigned on one charge of procuring a miscarriage, a felony that carries a penalty of up to seven years in prison. After her arrest and arraignment, Abreu

was detained in the Framingham Prison for Women, a maximum security facility, for three days and was required by Judge Michael Brooks to relinquish her passport.

The case rests on a little-known section of Massachusetts law that makes it illegal to use any "poison, drug, medicine or other noxious thing" to induce a miscarriage. The law further stipulates that anyone who "administers, advises or prescribes any such methods" can also be charged.

Although Abreu is out on bail, the case presently rests on the findings of the state Medical Examiner. Abortion is legal in Massachusetts up to 24 weeks, and the M.E. is doing tests to determine Ashley's gestational age at the time of her birth. If he finds that Abreu took the Cytotec after the 24-week cutoff to have a legal abortion, the District Attorney could then charge her with homicide.

Abreu is not the first woman to face criminal charges for taking Cytotec to end an unwanted pregnancy. In 2004, Gabriella Flores, a 22-year-old South Carolina farm worker, served four months in prison for taking the medication and then miscarrying. According to the Kaiser Network, the mother of three took five tablets on Oct. 1, 2004. When an acquaintance notified police about Flores' actions, she, like Abreu, was charged with "procuring a miscarriage." Kaiser reports that Flores told police that she could not afford to care for a fourth child.

"The tragedy [of the Abreu case] is less a measure of one teenager's bad choices than it is an indictment of a culture that tells all women that abortion is their legal, constitutionally-protected right, but tolerates a lack of access for the neediest women," columnist Eileen McNamara wrote in The Boston Globe.

Feminists, civil libertarians and reproductive rights and public health activists agree. "The District Attorney has the discretion to decide whether prosecuting Abreu is a good use of resources," says Sarah Wunsch, an attorney at the American Civil Liberties (ACLU) Union Foundation Massachusetts. "We think it's a bad choice that he doesn't need to pursue.'

What's more, says Wunsch, the case illustrates what's wrong with failing to provide students with comprehensive sex education. "Much more needs to be done to educate young women and men about access to contraceptives and other family planning services," she says. "[Former Governor] Mitt Romney brought us a million dollars in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in the public schools. This is bad education."

How much Abreu and her partner knew about contraception is unknown.

"The case is heartbreaking all around," says Melanie Zurek, Executive Director of the Boston-based Abortion Access Project. "But it's not something that should be handled by the courts."

Instead, activists believe the focus should be on teaching young people about options for pregnancy and sexually-transmitted disease (STD) prevention and working to protect the nearly 600,000 women around the world who die each year from pregnancy-related problems or during childbirth.

Information about the safe use of Cytotec and RU486 can be obtained by going to gynuity.org.

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Nat'l briefs

GOOGLE EARTH NOW SHOWS DAMAGED GULF COAST

Responding to harsh criticism, Google Inc. agreed April 1 to replace pre-Hurricane Katrina satellite images of the Gulf Coast with current photography in its Google Earth search program. Critics in the U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology charged the internet giant of "airbrushing history" by not providing updated imagery of New Orleans. John Hanke, Google director of satellite imagery, responded that the older images were used for reasons of quality and not as an attempt "to rewrite history" or encourage tourism. Current Google Earth images now show New Orleans dotted with blue tarps on damaged roofs and the Lower Ninth Ward littered with debris. Images of rural areas have yet to be updated.

JOURNALIST RELEASED FROM PRISON

Independent reporter Josh Wolf was freed from "coercive custody" April 3 after spending 226 days in a California prison - the longest imprisoned journalist in U.S. history - for resisting a subpoena to testify before a Federal grand jury and for refusing to release video footage of a 2005 San Francisco anti-G8 summit protest. Local and federal law enforcement wanted to see the video tape as part of an investigation into "crimes" committed during the protest. To read more about the case visit joshwolf.net/blog.

COURT SAYS EPA MUST REGULATE CAR EMISSIONS

The U.S. Supreme Court delivered a landmark decision April 2 ruling that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must regulate automobile emissions, unless it can show scientific reasons that support a refusal to do so. According to emissions data from 2005, the transportation sector accounted for 33 percent of U.S. carbon emissions, a major contributor to global warming. Though several counter-suits have been filed by automakers, the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, an auto industry Congressional lobbying group, said it is ready to work with the EPA and Congress to fulfill the Court's decision. However, the Bush Administration is expected to stall on global warming legislation for the remainder of the president's term.

SEATTLE TO PAY \$1 MILLION TO WTO PROTESTERS

In a settlement reached April 2, the City of Seattle agreed to pay \$1 million to those unlawfully arrested during the 1999 protests against the meeting of the World Trade Organization (WT0). Approximately 175 demonstrators were arrested in a downtown park Dec. 1, 1999, where they were sitting and peacefully singing. The city also promised to clear the protesters' records and provide police training on why the department's mass arrests did not have sufficient probable cause. The money, which does not come from taxpavers but from the city's insurer, will be used to cover legal fees and then split between the plaintiffs, who will each get between \$3,000 and \$10,000. The city has already spent about \$800,000 to settle claims of police misconduct during the historic anti-globalization protest, which attracted more than 50,000 protesters.

MORE EAST COAST WIND POWER

A large wind-power energy project breezed through the Massachusetts state environmental approval process March 30, finding itself one step closer to becoming the nation's first offshore wind farm. The Cape Wind project would include 130 turbines within 25-square miles of Nantucket Sound, projecting to provide up to 79 percent of the region's electricity. Opponents of the plan cite possible negative impacts on tourism, commercial fishing, and the picturesque ocean side views enjoyed from many of the Cape's multi-million dollar properties.

NYPD GONE WILD

From RNC to Critical Mass to the South Bronx and beyond, a paramilitary police force makes its own laws, smothers dissent ... and says its for our own good.

Critical Mass TARGETED

BY JESSICA LEE

he several hundred bicy- trend with the police issuing tickets for clists who set off from Union Square March 30 were not only putting foot to pedal in the long struggle against the of cyclists. Nonetheless, almost 40 rid-New York Police Department's ers evaded the police and completed (NYPD) crusade to squash Critical the Mass in Manhattan, but also defiantly facing down a new parade ordinance threatening freedom of assembly and speech.

Enacted unilaterally by the police department Jan. 28, the new parade ordinance states that any "recognizable" experience. group" of 50 or more must first obtain a walk, in the road or in the parks.

"This [new parade] rule was propa-Critical Mass," said Norman Siegel, former head of the New York Civil Liberties Union, at the March 30 pregetting pulled over. ride press conference.

and 46 summons were issued, to the surprise of many people, no one received a ticket for violating the new parade ordinance. The evening ride – summons for "not riding on the right which is held on the last Friday of the month in more than 300 cities around the world - followed a now familiar alleged traffic violations and scooter cops working aggressively to break the ride up into smaller and smaller groups two-hour ride, including Councilwoman Rosie Mendez (D-Lower East Side) who rode via pedicab, vowing to support the cyclists and to

protect the First Amendment. For many, participating in the ride was an extremely frustrating

Eduardo Davila received a summons permit if they want to gather on a side- early in the ride for allegedly passing through a red light. "This is my first Critical Mass ride, and it discouraged gated for one reason alone, to get me completely," Davila said. He had ridden no more than three blocks up Park Ave. from Union Square before

"It is so ridiculous it has gotten to
Critical Mass right now," said Austin

Although three people were arrested this point. This should be something crush," said Skye Chamberlain, a Cooper Union student who received a side of the road when no bike lane available" on Park Avenue South.

> Alan Fox, in turn, received a summons for the opposite reason, for "riding outside the bike lane" on Park Avenue South, "This is harassment, it is just an annoyance ticket," Fox stressed.

"CRITICAL MASS STOPPED **BEING FUN**"

Speaking with cyclists at the Times Up! bike repair shop in Lower Manhattan before the March 30 ride, The Indypendent found similar feelings of frustration and discouragement about what has happened to Critical Mass since the NYPD crackdown began in August 2004 when 264 bikers were arrested during a massive ride of 7,000 cyclists that snaked through Lower Manhattan three days before National Convention (RNC).

"People couldn't feel worse about

Horse, an avid bike rider and Times good for the city, not something to Up! volunteer. "The police have waged a campaign against Critical Mass with arrests and lots of tickets especially in the last few months. Since RNC, there have been less and less people riding."

"Critical Mass stopped being fun and became more of a chore," said Leah Todd as she repaired her green road bike. "I was anxious that I would be arrested and get my bike taken again." Todd is involved in a civil lawsuit against the city for false arrest during the RNC, the length of her detention and conditions at Pier 57, where the police temporary held arrestees.

Steve Klein, who has been riding Critical Mass bike rides since they begin in NYC in 1993, recalled "the good old days" before the RNC when police took a more easygoing approach to the ride, which grew to include thousands by the summer of 2004. "I stopped going to Critical Mass because I got tired of looking the beginning of the Republican over my shoulder," Klein explained while he helped people fix their bikes. "It isn't fun anymore."

crime. In the four years, the

Department of Transportation

installs red-light surveillance

cameras; legislation man-

dates the creation of cameras

(continued on page 10) at Park Avenue South and 18th Street during the Critical Mass ride in Manhattan March 30. PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY



NYPD used video cameras to threaten pedestrians and halted bicyclists with arrest in order to clear the street corner

93 YEARS OF ILLEGAL PARADES IN NYC

were warned that the IWW planned to make

disturbance that might develop in the bud ...

jostling persons from the sidewalks and jeering

trouble in Union Square, and Police

OLICE USE CLUBS From The New York Times, April 5,1914: ON I.W.W. RIOTERS "Members of the IWW who have made their lack of employment an excuse for disorderly demonstrations, reinforced by Anarchists of the

Many Broken Heads Among Ag Alexander Berkman-Emma Goldman brand, tators Who Jeered at Order clashed with the police in Union Square yesterto Disband Parade.

STRIKE MEETING BROKEN | Commissioner McKay was prepared to nip any 9 Disturbers Who Interrupt One of the things the IWW and the Anarchists

Disturbers Who Interrup had intended to do was to parade again without a permit as they did two weeks ago yesterday, erated Union Arrested. when several hundred marched up Fifth Avenue

MOUNTED MEN CALLED at those in automobiles and carriages."

Unemployed took place at Union Square. Between 6,000 and 7,000 unemployed men and women, Industrial Workers of the gent of more than 400 Rebecca Edelsohn pro-World (IWW) members police officers. Led by a tecting his body with her and anarchists demonstrated on this day in the name of food, shelter and work. Throughout the their clubs left and square, black flags, right and accomplish- out a permit. inscribed with statements ing the brutal suppression such as "Hunger" and of the parade by way of

"Bread or Revolution," broken skulls and bloody n April 4, 1914, a were held high and the noses. One participant, mood was angry and militant. As the crowd surged toward Fifth Avenue in the head so severely that the form of a massive parade, they were immediately met by a continmounted unit, the police own. In addition to the charged directly into beatings, several arrests the crowd, brandishing occurred, many on the

IWW organizer Joe O'Carroll, was beaten over witnesses claim he would have been killed were it not for the activist grounds of parading with-

—STEPHANIE

1955: The NYPD's Bureau "the Red Squad") is formed. This secret division is tasked with spying on domestic political dissidents - especially, by the 1960s, the Black Panthers and the Young Lords.

1969: The first police cam- 1971: The 1971 "Handschu 1980: NYPD signs the 1993 – 1996: Despite of Special Services ("BoSS" or eras are installed near City Hall. lawsuit" exposes the level of Handschu Consent Decree, citywide political surveillance.



resulting in the prohibition of the NYPD from investigating any individual or group without specific information of devices, especially security settlement, the NYPD agrees to release contents of its 250.000 New Yorkers.

at ATM machines; and various tourism-heavy areas of the the formal prohibition of politcity are flooded with cameras. ical spying and infiltration, technologically sophisticated

1998: The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) notes that there are 2,397 surveillance cameras in

2002: The city files to 2002: Unconfirmed attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. A globalization organizacompromise is reached in tions, including the NYC abide by constitutional standards that protect free to World Economic

modify the Handschu Consent reports allege that the NYPD Decree in the aftermath of the has infiltrated various antiwhich the police agree to Independent Media (YPI) Center, in the run up Forum meetings in New York.



arrested at events throughout Republican National Convention, the NYPD has violated the the winter of 2002 are forced to the NYPD's "RNC Intelligence answer NYPD questions con- Squad" engages in massive precerning their political beliefs. convention surveillance of politi- of public demonstrations. The debriefing forms" are later the world. discontinued and destroyed, according to the police.

2003: Antiwar protesters 2004: In the run-up to the 2007: A judge rules that The infamous "demonstration cal groups in NYC and around city responds by attempting to

Decree through its videotaping further modify Handschu – and perhaps eliminate it entirely.

-CHRIS ANDERSON



South Bronx Students Stand up to NYPD

ore than 50 students from the Community School for Social Justice (CSSJ) in the South Bronx rallied in front of Department of Education headquarters in Lower Manhattan on March 29 to protest aggressive police searches on their campus. Eight days earlier, CSSJ students who refused to walk through random scanners installed by NYPD officers were threatened with suspension and Karim Lopez, an afterschool program coordinator, was banned from the school after he brought representatives of the New York Civil Liberties Union to observe the

"How much of our freedom must we give up for safety?" asked Edwin Rogriguez, a junior at CSSJ. "I am tired of being searched illegally and being treated like a criminal just to get an education. It's time for student rights to be known and respected. We need to restore the balance

PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY

WATCHEN COPS ROLL

BY ANN SCHNEIDER

espite efforts to mask its spying activity, the city has not just been videotaping demonstrators, but has also placed infiltrators in groups around the world in advance of the 2004 Republican National Convention, leaked documents show.

Meanwhile, in federal court, the city continues to defy the letter and the spirit of a landmark 1970s class action suit that imposed modest limits on its ability to monitor, influence or disrupt political activists.

Handschu v. Special Services acquittals of the Panther 21 ing activity and semi-civilian control the FBI's counter-intelligence pro- the decree's enforceability.

gram (COINTELPRO) and had amassed more than one million files on New Yorkers. In 1980, a federal decree prohibited police spying on every time a protester was arrested, First Amendment activities without a reasonable, articulable suspicion that a crime was about to occur. The 1980 settlement restricted police surveillance activities, created a "paper trail" to authorize investigations, and prohibited the dissemination of the information gathered.

Arguing that such limits are "unworkable in a time of terrorism," the city sought to modify the consent decree in 2002. Language removed Division was filed in 1971 after the included the injunction against spyrevealed that the NYPD was over when a political investigation activity into the NYPD's patrol engaged in dirty tricks similar to could be launched, in effect removing guide.

Demonstration Debriefing Form cataloguing "organization name," "position" and "prior demonstration history." U.S. District Court Judge Charles Haight Jr. was not pleased, saying, "These recent events reveal an NYPD in some need of discipline." Commissioners Ray Kelly and David Cohen claimed that they were unaware the form was being used and that they immediately destroyed that database.

As a result of the revelations, Judge Haight made the police incorporate written guidelines on investigations of First Amendment

The city next tried to unilaterally

In 2003, it came to light that the legalize videotape surveillance of NYPD had been compiling a demonstrations by issuing Rule 47 in September 2004. The indefatigable Handschu lawyers returned to court to enjoin the rule, pointing to three peaceful and permitted rallies that were videotaped by the police, including one by Coalition for the Homeless. The City argued that videotaping

> was legal as long as the purpose wasn't solely to investigate political activity. On Feb. 15, 2007, Judge Haight ruled that the NYPD may only videotape for legitimate law enforcement purposes. Calling the homeless demonstration "quintessential political activity," he said police videotaping of it was an "egregious" violation of the guidelines and "any future use by the NYPD of video and photo- Lawyers Guild, 113 University Place, graphic equipment during the course 8th floor, (212) 269-6018.



of an investigation involving political activity without compliance with the guidelines' protocol could form the basis for a contempt proceeding."

The city has asked the judge to "vacate, amend, alter and/or reconsider" his Feb. 15 order. A public hearing on the city's motion will be held April 11, 2 p.m. at 500 Pearl Street in Judge Haight's courtroom.

The People's Lawyer is a project of the New York City chapter of the National

NYPD Black

BY A.K. GUPTA

he reason the NYPD has cracked down on Critical Mass bike riders is not because it lacks awareness of the virtues of non-polluting transportation, but because its aim is to strangle any public dissent that it cannot control.

Like the Giuliani-era's infamous broken window policy of arresting on the notion that minor infractions such as public drinking or setting off fireworks were gateway crimes to general mayhem, the NYPD deploys maximum force against the smallest demonstrations to keep the larger public in check.

The police thinking is that if a minor unauthorized protest were allowed to take the streets, then the door would be opened to mass dissent. The only demonstration allowed is the cattle-pen variety that isolates the protest virus from the body politic.

The recent past shows no lack of police attacks against peaceful political events: the crackdown of a march memorializing gay-bashing victim Matthew Shepard, hundreds of riot cops rushing the stage and attacking participants during the Million Youth March. cops going wild during the funeral of police-murder victim Patrick Dorismond, the disruption of the Feb. 15, 2003, protest of the impending invasion of Iraq, and the denial of Central Park to New Yorkers wanting to protest the Republican National Convention

The police justify the harsh measures by flipping the script, claiming they are the ones protecting the protesters and the right of protest. Of course, when violence does occur during the event, it is usually at the hands of the police – charging into crowds on horseback, slamming scooters into bicycles, tackling peaceful marchers.

Even in those instances where the police are peaceful their stance is to intimidate. There are countless demonstrations where police outnumber protesters and where they come equipped in riot gear, on motorcycles and horses, in helicopters, command vehicles and fleets of paddy wagons and undercover in plainclothes. The show of force is intended to frighten off all but the most diehard, which is precisely what is happening with Critical Mass.

The police are obsessed because the bike riders do represent a threat - the threat of a good example. They are exercising their rights, but in a city of massive inequality and racial divisions allowing people to define where and when and how they protest would threaten the established order

Ultimately it is this order that the police serve. Their role is to keep New York safe as a business Mecca, a shopper's paradise, a playground of the rich. Allowing the rabble to protest entrenched poverty, substandard housing, privatization of public space or police brutality would mar the cultivated image.

The end result is to squelch basic freedoms and replace them with the freedom to shop and consume. If there is hope it is to be found among the protesters, dissenters and civil libertarians who do not go quietly into the night and continue to fight 35 for real democracy, not the display-window variety.





9





(ABOVE) More than 200 bicyclists leave Union Square in the first Critical Mass ride to directly confront NYPD's new parade rule March 30. Riders would clash with NYPD within the first block. (BELOW) NYPD has spent the last several years crafting tactics for dismantling the ride. PHOTOS: FREDASKEW.COM

Switching Gears to the Courts

continued from page 8

"Time's Up! does not know why the city is cracking down on non-polluting transportation," said Bill DiPaola, the organization's cofounder. He stressed the connection between the continual harassment of large bicycle rides, the attempt to limit the amount of pedicabs in the city and recent press reports of extensive domestic spying being carried out by the NYPD (see sidebar).

While sympathetic to his fellow rider's sentiments, Horse expressed frustration at the low turnout for the ride. "Instead of rallying around the fact that police are attacking Critical Mass, people are washing their hands of it 'because it isn't fun anymore." said Horse, who himself has been arrested during rides more than once. He noted that when police in London tried to shut down the bike ride, five times the normal number of people showed up in support the following month. "We need to have more community," he said.

TALKING TO THE COPS

The Indypendent tried repeatedly to contact an NYPD spokesperson for comment. When that failed, Indypendent reporter Ryan Dawes began interviewing on-duty police under the guise of being a tourist.

Speaking in Sunset Park on March 30, Officer L.K. Andreassen, explained that "disorderly conduct could be pretty much anything."

An unnamed officer, while patrolling the west side of Madison Square Garden on March 28, described how a scooter task force accompanies most rides to help contain the mass of cyclists while preventing vehicles from cutting into the group. In addition to "protecting everyone from danger," scooters and police cruisers are then used to hack up the herd of riders and divert them down separate streets with the guidance of plainclothes cops participating in the ride. He

also described Critical Mass to other on-duty officers as, "the mass bike demonstration where we send out lots of guys on scooters to write lots and lots of summonses."

As for the biggest mystery from the March 30 ride – why did the NYPD fail to enforce its own parade ordinance? – the answer can likely be found in the courtroom where the police and cyclists have battled continuously since August 2004.

AN UNLIKELY ALLY

In what is considered an "offensive move" in the bicycle community, the Five Borough Bicycle Club (5BBC) and several other plaintiffs filed a lawsuit March 27 in federal court, asking the judge to stop NYPD's new regulation. "Suing city government is not one of the ordinary roles of the 5BBC, but organizing group bicycle rides is," the group disclosed on its website. "The NYPD's parade rules essentially outlaw large bike rides, under the dubious claim that bicycle rides are a danger to public health and safety."

Civil rights attorney Gideon Oliver, who helped represent Time's Up! in court, suggested that the timing of the 5BBC lawsuit might have put a wrench in NYPD's plans to enforce the new ordinance on March 30 as a means to stop the mass bicycle ride.

"There is a lawsuit pending that challenges application of the parade ordinance to require a permit for bike rides," explained Oliver. "In all likelihood, the city is being careful knowing that a judge is thinking about the issue."

U.S. District Court Judge Lewis A. Kaplan stated that a decision would be rendered on whether or not to preliminarily enjoin the enforcement of the new paradae rules before April 27, when the next scheduled Critical Mass ride is to take place in Manhattan.

Ryan Dawes contributed to this report.

AMPLIFYING FREEDOM OF SPEECH

BY JOHN TARLETON

Standing in front of the steps at the south end of Union Square, Geoffrey Blank helped launch an experiment in free speech in May 2003. Equipped with several large, hand-painted banners and a handheld, 10-watt battery-powered megaphone, Blank and a handful of other members of the No Police State Coalition would launch into passionate monologues on the Iraq War, the Patriot Act, "9-11 Truth" and much, much more. It was unfettered free speech, warts and all, unflinchingly delivered in three-hour blocks, three times a week.

"We not only wanted to educate the public," Blank said, "we wanted to engage them to get up and speak and debate. ... It wasn't like blogging in your living room."

The speak-outs drew hundreds at their peak in the summer of 2004 but were disbanded by September 2005 as Blank and his cohorts endured numerous arrests and confiscations of their bullhorns for violating a sound permit ordinance that dates back to the 1930s.

Now, Blank faces more than two years in jail following his conviction last fall on two counts of resisting arrest and one count of using a bullhorn without a permit, all of which stem from his activism at Union Square. His sentencing is scheduled for April 30 and a rally on his behalf featuring civil rights attorney Lynne Stewart will be held April 13 at Judson Memorial Church. Despite the possibility of landing in jail, Blank is hopeful that the courts will overturn the city's sound permit ordinance.

"It's been a pain in the ass, but we needed to go through this to make the case," Blank said.

For more information, call 718-945-5188.





Aug. 29, 2004

264 Critical Mass participants are arrested during a massive ride through Manhattan that took place three days before the beginning of the Republican National Convention.

Dec. 23, 2004
U.S. District Court Judge
William H. Pauley III rules that
Critical Mass cyclists do not
need a permit to ride.

Mar. 22, 2005

The city files a lawsuit against Time's Up!, a NYC environmental organization, for allegedly participating in, and promoting, an illegal parade by advertising Critical Mass rides in fliers.

Apr. 29, 2005

34 arrested in Critical Mass commemorating the 12th anniversary of the movement

Feb. 15, 2006

New York State Supreme Court

Justice Michael D. Stallman

denies the city's motion for a

preliminary injection to stop

non-permitted rides.

Jan. 28, 2007
NYPD announces new rules
that require groups of 50 or
more to obtain a permit if
they want to gather on a
sidewalk, in the road, or in
the parks. The rules affect
pedestrians, vehicles and
cyclists alike. NYPD set to
begin enforcing rule Feb. 25.

Mar. 27, 2007 City quietly dropped lawsuit

Mar. 27, 2007 Five Borough Bicycle Club files

lawsuit against city over new parade rule.

*** Multiple civil lawsuits have

been filed against NYPD since August 2004 for "unlawful" arrests during Critical Mass. See bicycledefensefund.org for more information.

ANARCHIST EVER ANARCHIST BOOK BOOK FAIR IN THE BIG APPLE

BOOK FAIR, ART GALLERY, PANELS AND WORKSHOPS

Saturday, April 14, 11am-7pm

JUDSON MEMORIAL CHURCH

55 Washington Sq. South (btw Thompson and Sullivan)
Subway: A,C,D,E,F,V to West 4th; R to 8th Street;

1 to Christopher Street

Bus: M1, M2, M3, M5, M6 and M8 all stop nearby

ADDITIONAL PANELS AND WORKSHOPS

Sunday, April 15, 1pm-7pm

SIXTH STREET COMMUNITY CENTER
638 East 6th Street, between Aves. B&C
Subway: R to 8th Street or the F to 2nd Ave

A one-day exposition of books, zines, pamphlets, art, film/video, and other cultural and very political productions of the anarchist scene worldwide, at Judson Memorial Church in Manhattan. Featuring over 40 tables as well as an art gallery, panels, presentations, workshops, and skill shares. Further panels will follow on Sunday, April 15.

Food available (\$), plus childcare (free). Wheelchair accessible.

Further information: info@anarchistbookfair.net

www.anarchistbookfair.net

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world briefs

CASTRO DENOUNCES ETHANOL AS ALTERNATIVE FUEL SOURCE

In light of the March 26 meeting between President Bush and major North American automakers, Cuban President Fidel Castro criticized Bush's commitment to ethanol as an alternative fuel source. In a March 28 article in Granma International, Castro expressed concern that in a rush to supply the U.S. with its high demand for corn-based ethanol, countries in the developing world would not only be starved by a lack of corn grown for food, but additionally would plow through all of their forests for more corn crops. Rather than transforming a global food source into crops for fuel, Castro encouraged the U.S. to focus on energy conservation.

U.S. FORCES ACCUSED OF GENOCIDE IN IRAQ

Residents of Iraq's al-Anbar province are accusing U.S. forces of committing genocide. in the region, reported *The Inter Press* Service March 30. Iragis allege that U.S. troops and Iraqi security forces are "executing people seized during home raids," with some claiming the actions are part of a "genocidal campaign." In Fallujah, police detention centers are holding hundreds of men without legal representation. Residents of Falluiah and Ramadi also state that U.S. forces have allowed Shia militiamen to conduct raids in Sunni areas. In response, a U.S. military spokesperson said that their forces, "in no way support Shi'ite death squads and militias.

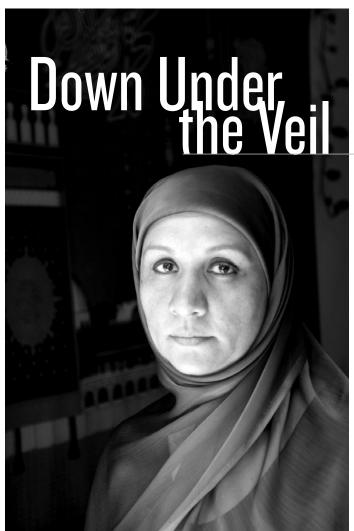


RED ARMY LEADER RELEASED

Brigitte Mohnhaupt, one-time leader of the Red Army Faction (RAF), was released from a German prison March 25 after serving 24 years for a series of attacks carried out by the group. The RAF, also known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang, was a revolutionary guerrilla group active in West Germany from the 1970s until its dissolution in 1998. Mohnhaupt was captured in 1982 and sentenced to life imprisonment for nine murders, including that of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, a German industrialist and former Nazi. She was also implicated in the attempted murder of Gen. Frederick Kroesen, former commander of U.S. forces in Europe. While Mohnhaupt has reportedly not repudiated her actions, a German court found her to no longer pose a security risk and therefore fit for release. Several other former RAF members remain in prison.

CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT NOTES GRIM CONSEQUENCES

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a draft report March 30 from Brussels outlining the future consequences of global warming for each degree increase in temperature. The report - the second of four scheduled release this year - predicts extinction of 30 percent of known species. water and food shortages, poverty and floods. Bv 2050, more than two billion people might be without access to potable water. Positive, though ephemeral, effects of climate change could include greater food production in northern regions of the world. The network of 2,000 scientists are helping to finalize the series of reports, which are intended as a guideline for governments to develop climate change policy and draft legislation. The final report will presented at a world summit of leaders from the world's wealthiest countries in June.



Mahboba Rawi, 38, has lived in Australia for 25 years. Rawi began wearing the hijab after the accidental death of her son and says the scarf has brought her closer to God. PHOTO: LISA D'AMBRA.

By Marianna Leishman

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—It's late afternoon as a young woman in a yellow-string bikini carries her fiberglass short-board toward the surf, her elongated shadow drifting past the blue hijab of another woman lying on the beach with her children.

On the same beach, young Muslim women are training to become surf lifesavers as part of a \$600,000 federal program designed to better represent Australia's diverse mix. Many of the lifesavers wear a redand-yellow burqini, a full-length swimming outfit that allows them to follow their religious beliefs while tackling the rips and currents of Australia's famous coastline.

Cronulla Beach, in Southern Sydney, wasn't so tranquil in December 2005 when thousands of Anglo-Australians went on an anti-Muslim rampage, resulting in an unprecedented beach lockdown. A crowd of 5,000, organized by word of mouth and text messages, reportedly chanted slogans such as "wog-free zone," "ethnic cleansing unit," and "Lebs go home," in reference to the estimated 250,000 Australians of Lebanese descent.

Anglo-Australian teenage boys scrawled, "We grew here, you flew here" in black marker on their chests, epitomizing a campaign targeting non-white immigrants who frequent the beaches, specifically the growing Muslim population in Australia.

One result of the riots was Muslim women became a political football. The incessant anti-Muslim rhetoric espoused by politicians and the media was masked as supposed concern for the protection of Muslim women. Politicians suddenly became feminists — talking of "our women" and "their women" in a campaign to liberate Muslim women from what was perceived as a misogynist religion.

'THIS SCARF IS MY IDENTITY'

Absent from this debate were the actual voices of Muslim women, who, meanwhile, were being spat on, physically attacked and having their headscarves ripped off on the street. While the debate over the headcoverings, commonly known as a hijab, is symbolic of the larger issue of xenophobia in Australian society, many Muslim women feel they have been denied the opportunity to represent themselves.

"This scarf is my identity, and I am peaceful with it," says Mahboba Rawi, 38, as she sits on a couch in her townhouse in the Sydney suburb of Ryde.

Born in Kabul, Rawi fled Afghanistan at age 14 to escape persecution by the pro-Soviet government after she led student protests against the Russian invasion. With no passport and little money, Rawi walked over the mountains from Kabul to Peshawar, Pakistan, and then on to India before marrying and coming to Australia on her own in 1984, at age 16.

Once in Sydney, Rawi established Mahboba's Promise, a charity that provides food, shelter, medical care and education to widows and orphans in Afghanistan. Despite the humanitarian work in her birth land, she always returns to Australia.

"I loved this country," Rawi says of Australia, "from the moment I walked onto the soil."

Australia's Muslim Women Face a Rising Tide of Xenophobia

Since arriving two decades ago, she has organized English programs and swim lessons for Muslim women in Sydney's western suburbs. She feels she has an obligation to rectify the image of Muslim women in the media and public sphere.

"Talking is not enough," she says abruptly. "It's a hard job to make people understand you... what I do is a tiny bit of help to show that we are normal like everybody else."

Ironically, Rawi believes that it is public opinion, not cultural traditions, that are oppressing Muslim women in Australia. She blames the criticisms of the hijab on talk radio and in newspaper editorials for the disappearance of Muslim women from Sydney's public spaces. She says this fear to leave the house because of harassment or violence is limiting Muslim women's ability to practice their own faith, rendering them "prisoners in their own homes."

After 20 years of living in Australia she observes, "It is so horrifying to see that level of hate created in the Australian community that didn't exist before."

'WHITE AUSTRALIA' POLICY

Australia has a long history of racism. From its founding as a country in 1901 to as late as the mid-70s, the Australian government employed a "White Australia" policy. Later, as the country began to accept migrants from Italy and Asia, it became increasingly pluralistic. But public debate never turned away for long from the fear of being "flooded and invaded by Asians," as espoused by the right-wing One Nation Party during the 1990s.

Recent events such as the September 11 attacks, the Bali Bombings, and the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon have meant that Australia's Muslim population has been the target of harassment and racism. In 2003 the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board argued that these debates had led to a "damaging environment of anti-Arabic and anti-Muslim sentiment" and the Australian Arabic Council recorded a twenty-fold increase in complaints.

This increasingly hostile climate has touched Rawi's life as well. When 88 Australian citizens were killed during the Bali Bombings in 2002, teenagers burnt down Rawi's front fence. During the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict, her 10-year-old son was called a terrorist at school. This year a man at a train station followed Rawi, swore at her and told her to go back to her own country.

She says she wanted to cry, "I went back to my country, but 75 percent of the buildings were demolished, all there is was this horrible war, there is no house for me. I don't have a home to go to. This is my home."

Such experiences are not isolated to Sydney. On September 29, 2006, a suburban mosque in Perth was subjected to a drive-by shooting, the latest in a series of attacks including robberies and vandalism. Shots were fired into a second-floor window upon a congregation of nearly 400 people during evening prayer in the month of Ramadan. "Kids were screaming, mothers were running. People wanted to protect their children," reported Ahdielah Edries, President of the Islamic Council of Western Australia.

AUSTRALIAN 'VALUES'

For Rawi, the initiation with the hijab was not an easy one. She began wearing the scarf in Australia when her first son died in a tragic accident at the Kiama Blowhole landmark, about 75 miles south of Sydney. She says the scarf brought her closer to God.

She insists that she doesn't follow orders from her husband, father or her brother, and claims, "So many Muslim women love to wear a scarf, and people don't realize this. You look colorful, it's our fashion, it's our identity, it's our culture, it's our religion."

Unfortunately, the consequences of wearing a hijab in Australia are not always so simple. Author of *Does My Head Look Big in This?* Randa Abdel Fattah says that she stopped wearing the hijab because of the difficulty she experienced in trying to find a job.

Following the Cronulla riots, the hijab debate became coupled to the issue of integration. In October 2006, then Government Opposition Leader Kim Beazley called for a clause in Australia's visa application forms providing that applicants must adopt "Australian values." The suggestion was criticized as shifting the focus away from problems within Australian culture and presenting outsiders as something to be feared or controlled.

Taghred Chandab, 29, journalist and award-winning author of *The Glory Garage*, a book about her experiences growing up Lebanese Muslim in Australia, found the suggestion bizarre and bemusing, and wonders if many Australian-born Aussies would pass the test.

"Apart from cricket, wearing singlets and wearing thongs, which are all stereotypes in themselves, one cannot attribute any one thing to being Australian," she claims. "Being Australian encompasses many different values, which I believe are generally common sense and apply in every country."

For more, see the Common Language Project (clpmag.org)

REMEMBERING RUFINA AMAYA

Survivor of U.S.-Inspired Slaughter in El Salvador



BY THOMAS RIGGINS

n March 9 The New York Times ran an obituary of Rufina Amaya who died at 64 in El Salvador of a stroke the previous Tuesday. We should all remember the ordeal experienced by Ms. Amaya at the hands of troops specifically trained by U.S. Special Forces.

We read in the papers today that the U.S. plans on the "Salvadorization" of the

Iraqi counterinsurgency as a way to bring about a U.S. victory. In fact, *The New York Times Magazine* revealed in a May 2005 article that the Iraqi counterinsurgency is being advised by an American who led the Special Forces in El Salvador in the 1980s.

What can Iraqi civilians expect to face? Well, here is the story of Rufina Amaya and her village, El Mozote, and what happened at the hands of the Americantrained troops.

The Atlacatl Brigade was the first "Rapid Deployment Infantry Brigade" in the Salvadoran army. It was trained by the U.S. and was supposed to destroy the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), a peasant liberation movement fighting for bread and land against the Salvadoran oligarchy and its U.S. supporters.

On the night of Dec. 10, 1981, the Atlacatl Brigade took over the remote village of El Mozote. The brigade thought that FMLN members might sometimes be getting food and shelter in the village, but had no proof.

The next morning, the Brigade decided to put its training to work and make an example of the people of El Mozote. The soldiers decided to kill the entire population of the village (about 900 people, including peasants from the countryside who came to stay in El Mozote out of fear of the Atlacatl Brigade in the field). The population was unarmed.

The men were separated from the women and children and publicly executed, many were beheaded (not an Iraqi invention). Then all the girls and women 12 years old and up were killed, many were first raped. Finally, all the children under 12 and the babies were taken into the village church and then shot and bayonetted.

The next day, the brigade went to the nearby village of Los Toriles where the soldiers lined people up and shot them down. Back at El Mozote there was one survivor, Rufina Amaya, who had been able to hide. She heard her own small children screaming in fear as they were killed by the U.S. trained counterinsurgency troops.

She lived to tell the world what had happened. The United States, of course, defended the Atlacatl Brigade. The Reagan administration played down the reports that were published in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. Elliott Abrams, the same Elliott Abrams who now works for the Bush administration, told Congress that the reports of the killings were not believable.

The bulk of the mass media followed the Reagan line. *Time* magazine suggested that if there were dead children, we should remember that children can support our enemies, the guerrillas. No one was ever punished. The Atlacatl Brigade continued carrying out its mission, which culminated in 1989 with the murder of six Jesuit priests, their cook and her daughter.

Peace accords were signed between the government and the rebels in 1992 and a general amnesty was proclaimed. A 2000 court ruling stripped the amnesty protections from the sort of massacres that were perpetrated by the Atlacatl Brigade. To



date, no one has been brought to justice.

Rufina Amaya has died. She will no longer awaken in the night to the screams of her children. The Special Forces have moved on to train the Iraqi counterinsurgency. Elliott Abrams has moved on to serve another president who wages wars against other Third World people. It will be Iraqi mothers now who will face U.S.-trained forces.

Thomas Riggins is the book review editor for Political Affairs and can be reached at pabooks@politicalaffairs.net

DÉJÀ-VIETNAM:

McCain's Bizarre Baghdad Visit Repeats Past Mistakes

BY NORMAN SOLOMON

The media spectacle that John McCain made of himself in Baghdad on April 1 was yet another reprise of a ghastly ritual. Sen. McCain expressed "very cautious optimism" and told reporters that the latest version of the U.S. war effort in Iraq is "making progress."

Three years ago, in early April 2004, when an insurrection exploded in numerous Iraqi cities, U.S. occupation spokesman Dan Senor informed journalists: "We have isolated pockets where we are encountering problems." Nine days later, President Bush declared: "It's not a popular uprising. Most of Iraq is relatively stable."

For government officials committed to a war based on lies, such claims are in the wiring

When then-Defense Secretary Robert McNamara visited Vietnam for the first time, in May 1962, he came back saying that he'd seen "nothing but progress and hopeful indications of further progress in the future."

In October 1966, when McNamara held a press conference at Andrews Air Force Base after returning from a trip to Vietnam, he spoke of the progress he'd seen there. Daniel Ellsberg recalls that McNamara made that presentation "minutes after telling me that everything was much worse than the year before."

Despite the recent "surge" in the kind of media hype that McCain was trying to boost during his Baghdad visit this spring

the ground in Iraq, coupled with the Pentagon's air war escalating largely out of media sight, could enable the war's promoters to claim a notable reduction of "violence." And the U.S. death toll could fall due to reconfiguration or reduction of U.S. troop levels inside Iraq.

Such a combination of developments

>>The vast bulk of the U.S. media is in the habit of defining events around the world largely in terms of what's good for the U.S. government

- through the eyes of top officials in Washington.

has begun with most news coverage still indicating that the war is going badly for U.S. forces in Iraq. Some pundits say that U.S. military fortunes there during the next few months will determine the war's political future in Washington. And opponents of the war often focus their arguments on evidence that a U.S. victory is not possible.

But shifts in the U.S. military role on

would appeal to the fervent nationalism of U.S. news media. But the antiwar movement shouldn't pander to jingo-narcissism. If we argue that the war is bad mainly because of what it is doing to Americans, then what happens when the Pentagon finds ways to cut U.S. losses – while continuing to inflict massive destruction on Iraqi people?

U.S. news outlets will be inclined to

depict the Iraq war as winding down when fewer Americans are dying in it. That happened during the last several years of the Vietnam War, while massive U.S. bombing – and Vietnamese deaths – continued unabated.

The vast bulk of the U.S. media is in the habit of defining events around the world largely in terms of what's good for the U.S. government – through the eyes of top officials in Washington. Routinely, the real lives of people are noted only as shorthand for U.S. agendas. The political spin of the moment keeps obscuring the human moment.

Awakening from a 40-year nap, an observer might wonder how much has changed since the last war that the United States stumbled over because it could not win. The Congressional Record is filled with insistence that the lessons of Vietnam must not be forgotten. But they cannot be truly remembered if they were never learned in the first place.

Norman Solomon is the author of War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death. This article originally appeared on commondreams.org

reviews

Iran Bans the Girls

OFFSIDE (2006) DIRECTED BY JAFAR PANAHI

ike other directors of the Iranian New Wave, Jafar ■ Panahi uses techniques associated with both documentary and neorealist traditions to give his politically urgent films a low-key, but deadly serious immediacy. In Offside, the director applied these same techniques (location shooting, hand-held cameras, non-professional actors) to make another film about the repression of women under Iran's Islamist regime (after 2000's The Circle), but this time it's a comedy. Adopting a lighter touch, Panahi nonetheless retains his harshly critical perspective, causing Offside, like many of his earlier films, to be banned in Iran.

The concept of Offside is so metaphorically tidy that it could have easily proven trite or simplistic in lesser hands: a group of rabid teenage female soccer fans disguise themselves as boys and try to sneak into a World Cup match which, as women, they are forbidden to attend. Thankfully, Panahi makes several key decisions that exploit this concept to its fullest, starting with shooting the film on the run during an actual 2006 Iran-Bahrain match (the director deceived the authorities about his real intentions). Enhanced by the vérité-style filmmaking, this collapse of fiction and reality provides the film with an edgy gravitas that grounds its dominant mode of situation comedy.

Opening his film with one poorly disguised girl noticed by a boy who wants to help her, Panahi shows us how banning women from sporting events is looked on as foolish by men and women alike, especially among the younger generation. Arriving at the game, each of the girls is quickly identified and taken to a holding pen outside the stadium, where they are overseen by a couple of hapless guards more interested in watching the game. The majority of the rest of the film takes place here, with the girls straining to see into the stadium while trying to convince their young guards to, if not let them go, at least tell them what's happening during the game.

Panahi wisely locks our perspective with the girls, so we share in their frustration at only catching the occasional tantalizing glimpse of the exciting game we hear off-screen. Exasperated, the girls slyly manipu-





SAY IT LOUD: (*Ieft*) One of four public installations of 'Light Criticism' placed in January in Manhattan by the Anti-Advertising Agency with Graffiti Research Lab (GRL). Despite being removed by the Transit Authority the next day, the film documenting its installation has been viewed by hundreds of thousands. (*right*) GRL's 'L.A.S.E.R. Tag' was projected in February 2007 with the Mobile Broadcast Unit in Rotterdam, Holland. *PHOTOS COURTESY OF EYEBEAM AND GRAFFITI RESEARCH LAB*

GUERRILLA ART VS. GUERRILLA MARKETING

BY AMY WOLF

In an epic battle for eyeballs, it's anti-advertising vs. corporate advertising, but who chooses the weapons? Increasingly, marketing firms like AltTerrain and Interference Inc. have been appropriating the ideas and technology of street artists to push products that break through the clutter. With fines for illegal advertising ridiculously low and millions to be made, it's literally gotten ugly. However, as ad firms go guerrilla, the culture jammers stay one step ahead.

"What all marketers are dealing with is an absolute sensory overload," marketing pro Gretchen Hofmann told *The New York Times* in January. Success, then, means standing out from the din of commercial pollution. Guerrilla marketing techniques – ones that subvert the usual cluttered channels and forge new canvases and mediums – are among the more potent tools in an advertiser's arsenal.

Counter-corporate artists Evan Roth and James Powerdly founded the Graffiti Research Lab (GRL) as fellows at Eyebeam, a center for art and technology in Chelsea. They have graced the pages of *PR Week* and have been approached by Disney and Clear Channel for their Loaner (a powerful bike-mounted system for drawing on buildings with light known as L.A.S.E.R. Tagging).

The Throwies, developed with open source technology, were appropriated by Interference Inc. for the Cartoon Network ad campaign that led to a bomb scare in Boston in

January. GRL quickly distanced itself from the incident and posted on its website, "This is NOT the work of the Graffiti Research Lab ... It's just more mindless corporate vandalism from a guerrilla marketer who got busted." They have also learned from this incident, refusing to loan the bike to corporations.

Turner Broadcasting, owner of Interference Inc., settled with the city of Boston for \$2 million for the mishap, which "tickled" Steve Lambert, CEO of the Anti-Advertising Agency (AAA) and a fellow at Eyebeam's Research and Development OpenLab. Though a minor expense for Turner – who grosses \$600 million annually – this settlement was considered abnormal for corporations who consistently are slapped with small fines for illegal advertising.

In 2002, a \$50 fine was given to Microsoft Corp. for putting butterfly stickers on New York City sidewalks. In December 2006, New York branches of Chase Bank were merely threatened with a \$50 fine per violation for two dozen projections of the Chase logo on the sidewalk.

In comparison, graffiti artists can be fined up to \$350 per violation and jailed for repeat offenses. Lambert said, "Graffiti writer Avone is at Rikers right now awaiting trial, can't afford to post bail, and is looking at a year in prison. The CEOs of marketing companies, who knowingly and repeatedly break the law to promote their clients, and make tens of thousands of dollars ... they're not at Rikers."

Further injustice unfolded in Brooklyn on the end of an L train platform on March 23. Lambert recalled, "I saw a kid on the Lorimer stop around 2 a.m. surrounded by undercover cops who were arresting this kid for writing something on the wall. They hauled him away in cuffs. You would really have to be looking to find what he wrote. The whole platform is covered in ads. The real blight is being paid for and put up."

Michael Bakunin, an anarchist tagger who has recently been writing "Animal Cruelty" on circus ads, thinks graffiti should "inspire revolt and carry on anarchist ideals ... and get people to stop being consumer zombies."

THE REAL POLLUTION

"If [advertisers] reach consumers out of the house, they're more likely to act than if they're sitting on their couches," said Jack Sullivan, VP at Starcom USA, to Louise Story of The New York Times in January. Advertising is sold in eyeballs, or cost per impressions (CPM), and Manhattan has more eyeballs per inch per minute than any other metropolis in the nation. While advertisers clamor to plaster the outdoors, they face the ubiquitous expense of New York real estate, where one wall of a bus stop costs \$1,000-\$5,000 per month. These costs, and the competition of other advertisers, make the fight for attention fierce, fueling the impetus to find new terrain.

GRL's Powerdly advised street artists at a recent Eyebeam workshop, "It's easier to apologize than to ask permission." Unfortunately, corporations already know that it is cheaper and more effective to use guerrilla marketing illegally and pay the tiny fine.

Lambert challenged the appropriation of public space by corporate advertisers in his latest piece, "Light Criticism," by pasting cardboard stencils over video advertising monitors at subway entrances. The stencil, illuminated by the light from the monitors, read, "NYC's True Graffiti Problem." The video documentation of this project garnered more than 100,000 hits in the first week. This piece is reminiscent of Paper Tiger Television's use of cellophane with anti-advertising messages placed over a television screen in its 1985 broadcast from the Whitney Museum.

But not all street artists can, or want to, be anti-corporate. Rumors like "Barry McGee got picked up by Adidas" or "Neckface is doing Vans now," spread throughout the street artist community with mixed admiration and disgust.

"But what if Neckface's Van's billboard paid for a round of chemo for his grandmother?" offered Lambert. "There's a measurement and you need to see who comes out ahead. On the artists' side, they get a space and get to work in the daylight, but how does working with a company compromise what they are saying or could say? Do they leave with their integrity? The corporation invariably comes out ahead, it gets borrowed legitimacy and credibility with customers. Whatever money the artists gets, the company makes more."



tors. In a comically suspense-

ful scene, one girl uses a bathroom break to briefly escape her overwhelmed captor. The girls

also discuss why the rule, based on an arbitrary idea of too much cursing and male flesh, seems so ridiculously outdated, especially since they watch games on TV.

Rather charmingly, it's not these discussions that influence the guards, but instead the shared passion for soccer, as demonstrated in the unbridled celebration by every-

one whenever Iran scores a goal. Indeed, the force of the movie's argument comes less from its direct conversations about repression and more from the sheer excitement of the film's non-actors – these girls genuinely love soccer and the Iranian team. They speak with enthusiasm about individual players and even reconstruct specific

plays within their holding pen. In the end, the look on their faces when they hear a radio broadcast of Iran winning the game is worth a thousand arguments.

—CHARLIE BASS

Offside is currently playing at Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.

Gone but Not Forgotten

LOS DESAPARECIDOS EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO THROUGH JUNE 17

♦ he exhibit currently showing at El Museo del Barrio is a multimedia examination of the disappeared of Latin America.

The "disappeared" were the tens of thousands who were kidnapped, tortured and killed by right-wing military dictatorships from the late 1950s to the 1980s. An estimated 30,000 were disappeared in Argentina alone by that country's military junta.

The artists participating in this show have each experienced the horrors of military terror, as friends and family of the disappeared, and as activists in the resistance.

Many of the disappeared women gave birth in captivity, and their children were adopted without their knowledge by police or military families. The biological parents were killed soon after. Identidad, a collaboration among 13 Argentine artists, addresses this tragedy. It is a walled photo installation with 132 mirrors, each indicating a missing child born in captivity, interspersed between pairs of portraits. This is the longest piece in the exhibition, snaking along the wall and reemerging around corners.

Another notable work is

BOOKS

Weapon

of Choice

Fernando Traverso's Intervención urbana en la ciudad de Rosario con fotografía. Traverso painted bicycle silhouettes on buildings in Rosario and photographed them for this show.

"Often the first evidence that someone had been taken away was finding their abandoned bicycle, the preferred method of trans1970s Argentina was scarred by the dirty war, including his own.

Los Desaparecidos is an unforgettable exhibition. It is also a sad one for audiences here considering the role of the U.S. government in funding and training many of the military dictatorships. Many of the pieces prompt us to look at our own relationship to events





Luis Gonzáles Palma, (Guatemala, lives in Argentina) 1997 diptych, Empty Shirt.

portation for the resistance," noted Traverso, himself an activist during the resistance.

Marcelo Brodsky explores the disappearance of his brother and best friends in Buena Memoria, a photo and video installation. One of his photos is an eighthgrade classroom portrait with the faces of the "disappeared" crossed out. Every schoolroom in

and people who were disappeared and forgotten in America's backyard. As the exhibition notes state, "Remembering today will help us to avoid these events being repeated tomorrow."

—XAVIER TAVO

El Museo del Barrio 1230 Fifth Ave. at 104th St. elmuseo.org

COMPLICITY WITH EVIL: THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE AGE OF MODERN GENOCIDE BY ADAM LEBOR YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS (2006)

Tuman beings may have passed the point of no **⊥**return. Genocide is becoming the strategy of choice in warfare today.

Genocide, overwhelming as a phenomenon, is a tough subject for an author. Adam LeBor, a foreign correspondent for the London Times and The Independent, has written Complicity With Evil: The United Nations in the Age of Modern Genocide, a good book on genocide that is, however, inadequate to its subject.

LeBor covers three genocides. Rwanda (1994) counted 800,000 persons killed in three months; Srebrenica, Bosnia (1995), counted some 6,000 Bosnian Muslims massacred by Bosnian Serbs; Darfur, Sudan (2003-present), estimated at 200,000 dead and 2 million vil-



lagers displaced.

In each episode, LeBor details the failure of the United Nations, militarily and administratively, to stop the killing. During the Rwanda crisis, the U.N. commander in the capital of Kigali, Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, urgently requested reinforcements. Kofi Annan, then chief of the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York, rejected those requests. Instead, Dallaire's force was cut from 2,500 troops to 270.

At Srebrenica, a small contingent of Dutch U.N. peacekeepers fell back as Serbian troops took the town and entered the U.N. compound where thousands of Muslims had been given haven. The Dutch were disarmed, the refugees led out and murdered.

The U.N. Security Council has passed numerous resolutions on Darfur, dispatched missions there

and received reports from them to very little effect. John Holmes, the U.N. undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, recently completed a visit to Darfur during which Sudanese soldiers refused him entry into a refugee camp. "I find this quite extraordinary," Holmes said on March 25. "I am quite frustrated and angry."

LeBor's book is, unsurprisingly, not comprehensive. He omits the hundreds of Iraqis dying weekly in U.S.-provoked communal violence (ignited by its invasion and occupation of Iraq four years ago) and the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children who have died or suffered grievous harm as a result of the 1991 Gulf War and the U.N. sanctions regime that followed it.

The future possibilities of mass assaults on civilian populations appear to be limitless.

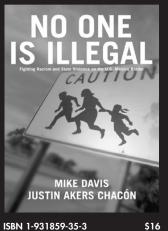
—DONALD PANETH



NO ONE IS ILLEGAL:

FIGHTING RACISM AND STATE VIOLENCE ON THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO BORDER

By Mike Davis and Justin Akers Chacón



Last year, a new civil rights movement exploded onto the scene of U.S. politics—but there is still far to go to win justice for immigrants.

No One Is Illegal high-lights the history of white vigilante violence in the U.S., drawing parallels with today's Minuteman Project, and remembers the long tradition of resistance among immiresistance among immigrants organizing in the factories and the fields.

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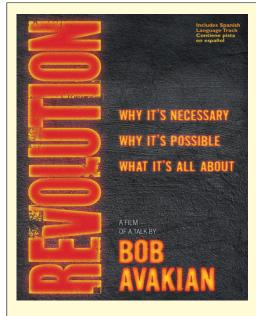
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Cornel West commenting on From Ike to Mao and Beyond

Bob Avakian has written a memoir containing three unique but interwoven stories. The first tells of a white middle-class kid growing up in '50s America who goes to an integrated high school and has his world turned around; the second of a young man who overcomes a nearfatal disease and jumps with both feet into the heady swirl of Berkeley in the '60s; and the third of a radical activist who matures into a tempered revolutionary communist leader. If you think about the past or if you urgently care about the future... if you want to hear a unique voice of utter realism and deep humanity... and if you dare to have your assumptions challenged and your stereotypes overturned then you won't want to miss this book.



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'It's like we're in a situation where we don't know where to go. It feels like an atmosphere of distrust, fear of the future, instability. I feel like there are no guidelines or parameters on where to go. But I think Bob Avakian has a plan full of hope in the face of uncertainty that weighs on people."

> Comments by a woman after showing of Revolucion in Mexico City

In 2003 Chairman Bob Avakian delivered an historic talk in the United States, now available in video. This talk is a wideranging revolutionary journey. It breaks down the very nature of the society we live in and how humanity has come to a time where a radically different society is possible. Full of heart and soul, humor and consciousness, it will challenge you and set your heart and mind to flight.

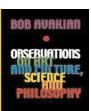


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Marxism and the Call of the Future: Conversations on Ethics. History, and Politics

by Bob Avakian and Bill Martin

This book offers readers a rare chance to witness a fascinating encounter between a radical social theorist and philosopher and a visionary communist leader and thinker. The challenging and unpredictable dialogue bristles with insights and provocations. Avakian and Martin wrestle with big questions that have to do with the state of the world and the possibility for radical change. The scope and relevance of Marxism, and the nature and reach of communist revolution, are at the heart of this rich and lively dialogue.

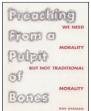


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Bob Avakian: Observations on Art and Culture, Science and Philosophy

"If you don't have a poetic spirit—or at least a poetic side-it is very dangerous for you to lead a Marxist movement or be a leader of a socialist state." Bob Avakian, Observations

This provocative collection of reflections and observations by Bob Avakian on art, culture, science and philosophy offers a rare treat. Excerpted from formal talks as well as more informal discussions and conversations, many of the texts in this collection allow the reader to experience firsthand the freewheeling Bob Avakian—in the process of developing his thinking and reenvisioning the communist project on a wide range of controversies, from the dictatorship of the proletariat to discussions of truth, beauty, science and imagination.



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Preaching from a Pulpit of Bones: We Need Morality But Not <u>Traditional</u> Morality

This provocative book includes a scathing refutation of the reality behind conservative Christian fundamentalist morality, a critical look at the limitations of "liberation theology," including a discussion of Jim Wallis' book, The Soul of Politics, and an inspiring look at morality from a revolutionary perspective. This work is even more timely today as it was when it was published in 1999. Bob Avakian says in the Prologue that "From whatever vantage point one looks, it is unmistakable that there is what could be called a 'moral crisis' in America. There has been, to a significant degree, 'a breakdown of traditional morality.' But the answer to this-at least the answer that is in the interests of the majority of people in the U.S. and the overwhelming majority of humanity—is not a more aggressive assertion of that 'traditional morality' but winning people to a radically different morality, in the process of radically transforming society and the world as

Talks

by BOB AVAKIAN. Chairman of The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

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- Communism and Religion: Getting Up and Getting Free-Making Revolution to Change the Real World, Not Relying on "Things Unseen"
- Conservatism, Christian Fundamentalism, Liberalism and Paternalism...Bill Cosby and Bill Clinton...Not All "Right" but All Wrong!
- "Balance" Is the Wrong Criterion—And a Cover for a Witch-hunt—What We Need Is the Search for the Truth: Education. Real Academic Freedom. Critical Thinking and Dissent

O&A Question and Answer session with Concluding Remarks

Download audio files online at bobavakian.net and revcom.us

Collection of Articles by Bob Avakian

The Coming Civil War and Repolarization for Revolution in the Present Era

This is a series of excerpts from conversations and discussions, as well as more formal talks, by Bob Avakian.

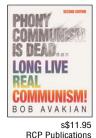
As the title indicates, these excerpts address questions of literally world-historical magnitude. There is a deep analysis of the stakes of this moment—and a bold and comprehensive strategy for meeting the challenges and wresting a revolutionary future out of that challenge. Everyone and anyone at all concerned about the current direction of society should dig into this pamphlet.



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